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The double negation in *מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמְצֵא* (Eccles. iii. 11) is by no means necessarily intended "to strengthen the negation," as the author believes; it may be equal to the Latin "feri non potest quin" (comp. *J. Q. R.*, I, p. 36, note 4).

The second chapter, for which the author claims originality, contains the rules concerning the use of the participle. Like the infinitive, the participle is considered as a noun, and is frequently placed by the side of the subject without the copula; the latter must be supplied, and its tense and person must be determined by the context. It is, however, not necessary that the same tense should be supplied which the preceding or following verb has. All possible cases are enumerated, and illustrated by numerous examples.

For the other chapters of the book no originality is claimed; they are in treatment and arrangement similar to the corresponding sections of the ordinary text-books of the Hebrew Grammar. One point may, however, be noticed. There is a peculiar wavering between the old and the new nomenclature of the tenses and the *vav* which modifies their meaning. The author seems to follow the rule recommended by Koheleth: *טוב שתאחז בזה וגם מזה אל תנח ירך*. Instead of the English terms, he has the Hebrew *עתידי* and *עבר*, translated in parenthesis by *actio perfecta* and *actio imperfecta*. The Latin agrees with the modern "perfect" and "imperfect"; the Hebrew with the old and more correct "past" and "future." The same wavering is noticed with regard to the *vav* before the finite verb; it is called *vav* conversive, but its force to effect a *change of the tense* is not openly admitted.

Notwithstanding these few criticisms I recommend the book to students of the Hebrew language; it testifies not only to the author's perfect mastery of the Hebrew Grammar, but also to his skill in explaining and teaching its peculiarities.

M. FRIEDLÄNDER.

#### ST. WILLIAM OF NORWICH.

"*The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich*," by Thomas of Monmouth. Edited by A. JESSOPP and M. R. JAMES. (Cambridge: Pitt Press.)

THIS admirably edited book is notwithstanding in some way a disappointment. This is in no sense due to the editors, who have performed their respective tasks with a skill and thoroughness which might have been anticipated from two such experts as Canon Jessopp and Dr. James. The text of the unique MS. discovered

under romantic conditions has been edited with such care that scarcely a single passage has been left doubtful, and the translation is both faithful and readable, while the notes and introduction give almost all the supplementary information the reader could desire. The document thus restored to us is full of interest to the student of English history, and even more so to the few interested in Anglo-Jewish history. It must always remain a memorable monument of English scholarship, and would add, if that were possible, to the reputation of its distinguished editors.

But, from the particular point of view in which the book must be regarded in these pages, it fails to satisfy the expectations which its discovery raised. One had hoped for a flood of light on the social conditions of the Jews of the time, a period for which we have scarcely any temporary record. Instead of this, there are but a couple of Jews mentioned by name; and what is said of them and the other Jews, apart from their connexion with the so-called martyrdom, is not particularly significant or instructive. But, above all, we are disappointed in the hope that this publication would throw full light upon the circumstances attending the death of the boy William, and the rise of the myth of the Blood Accusation which has had such fatal and tragic results ever since. It is true that, as will be seen, the volume shows the flimsy character of the evidence on which the local Church, if not the Papacy, accepted the theory of martyrdom. It shows how frail are the foundations on which this huge structure of malice and hatred has been erected, but the very failure of evidence makes it more difficult to understand the rise of the myth, and, though we may guess, we cannot be certain as to whom we are to credit with its erection.

In the first place, the book, though seemingly at first sight a contemporary record of the facts, turns out to be written by a stranger who was not in Norwich at the time of the alleged martyrdom, and even his account was composed nearly thirty years after the event. For the author of *The Life and Passion of William of Norwich*, was one Thomas of Monmouth, who appears to have been transferred to Norwich somewhere about 1150, six years later than the death of the little lad. He was thus absent from Norwich during the whole time when any sort of investigation was made into the disappearance of the boy William, and all he reports to us is based on hearsay evidence of the most unsubstantial character. Nor are his motives in compiling the book above suspicion. His position in his monastery was that of sacrist to the martyr, some of whose relics he confesses to have stolen. It was therefore to his direct interest to enhance the sanctity of the particular services on which he

was engaged; and it is for this reason that he enlarges much more upon the miracles than upon the martyrdom.

Nor were the sources from which Thomas got his hearsay evidence less disinterested than himself. For it appears that when the lad's body was discovered by one Henry of Sprowston, on Saturday, March 26, 1144, which was the first day of Passover in that year, he did not even take the trouble to carry the body to Norwich, and only returned on the following (Easter) Monday to give it casual burial. The first suggestion of a "martyrdom" comes from the relatives of the boy, who had missed him in the interim. The family afterwards told a curious story, given by Thomas, to account for the absence of the lad from their house. On Monday, March 21, a mysterious emissary had induced the boy's mother, a widow, to let him go to become a scullion to the Archdeacon of Norwich. This does not agree with another statement which emanated from the family that the boy was seen to enter the Jews' quarter. At any rate, it was not till nearly a week after the boy had left his mother's house that his uncle, his brother, and his cousin, go out to Thorpe Wood to see if the boy whose body had been discovered and already buried, was their little relative. Then follows a most remarkable circumstance. When they removed the earth which had been thrown lightly upon the body it was distinctly seen by them to move twice. This renders it extremely probable that the boy, when found on the Saturday, was not dead at all, but in some cataleptic fit. This is strongly confirmed by the fact, noticed at the time, that there were no signs of decomposition about the body, though, if he had been "murdered" on the preceding Wednesday, almost a week had elapsed. The same idea, indeed, seems to have occurred to the spectators of this striking incident, the boy's own relatives. Yet they took no steps to resuscitate him, but, merely satisfying themselves with his identity, covered the body up again. It is thus probable that the true authors of the death of William of Norwich were his own relatives. Shortly afterwards, Godwin Sturt, the boy's uncle, in open synod of the diocese, accuses the Jews of having murdered little William, and it is at once seen what ecclesiastical capital can be made out of such an accusation. Aimar, Prior of Lewes Priory, at once begs the body for his own priory, and that at once draws the attention of the Norwich authorities to the valuable property they might possess in the lad's remains. They refuse Aimar's request, and give the body burial in the monks' cemetery. The boy's relatives also find their account in the sanctity which little William had acquired. His brother Robert obtained a post in the monastery on the strength of his connexion with the martyr, and his mother had ultimately the distinction of

being buried in the monks' cemetery, much to the scandal of the more sober-minded of the monks. Godwin, the boy's uncle, traded for years on the possession of a gag with which he alleged the boy had been gagged by the Jews. Later on, the same Godwin seemed to have done a thriving trade in providing sacred candles for believers in the martyrdom of St. William. There is a very significant passage on page 192 of this volume in which Godwin, before allowing the teazle or gag to be used, demands to know from a poor woman what offering she had brought to obtain his help. It was thus, undoubtedly, to Godwin Sturt's interest that the death of the boy William should be interpreted as a case of martyrdom, and it is significant that the whole accusation comes from him in the first instance.

When the accusation was brought against the Jews before the Sheriff, he, in accordance with all the law of the time, refused to submit them to the jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich; they had the right to be judged by the King and his judges. They were then asked to submit themselves to ordeal, to which they seemed willing, but only demanded a delay, as was natural, considering the inflamed passions of the mob. The delay was refused them, and the whole of the Jewry of Norwich was taken into the castle for protection. No attempt at any legal proceedings against them was ever afterwards made, a most significant proof to my mind of their entire innocence. The editors have, I think, missed a point with regard to the attitude of the Sheriff towards the Jews. If they had been guilty of murder, it was as much his interest to convict them of it as it was to the interest of the boy's relatives to prove a martyrdom. One of the earliest items relating to Jews in the Pipe Rolls refers to the enormous fine of 2,000 marks paid by the Jews of London for killing a man. The Sheriff would have been able to pay the whole ferm of his county if he could have convicted the Jews of Norwich of murder. The fact that the Sheriff and his brother were afterwards shown to be deeply indebted to the Jews was another proof that it was not from motives of interest that the Sheriff defended the Jews, and persisted in declaring their innocence.

The evidence against them which Thomas of Monmouth was enabled to scrape together is indeed of the flimsiest possible character. The lad was said to have been seen by a cousin of his entering the house of a Jew named Eleazer, afterwards murdered by one of his debtors. That fact is just possible, though the family source of the statement renders it somewhat suspicious. Then a Christian woman, name not given, is said to have caught sight of the boy, crucified, through a chink in the door, and to have

supplied hot water for washing of the body. But this unnamed witness was never produced in any of the proceedings, and readers of *Silas Marner* will remember how rustic witnesses get to believe they have seen whatever they have been asked *if* they have seen. On the other hand, there is a touch of verisimilitude about the hot water which Jews use to bathe dead bodies. Next there is the statement of one Aelward Ded, that he had met some Jews carrying the corpse in a sack to Thorpe Wood. This statement was only made on his deathbed five years afterwards, when Ded explained his intermediate silence by threats from the Sheriff, though the said Sheriff had been then dead three years. Now the finding of the body in Thorpe Wood is to my mind one of the strongest points against any connexion of the Jews with the deed. Thorpe Wood is on the opposite side of the town from the Jewry, and to convey the body there the Jews would have had to pass through the whole of the English burg, whereas it would have been much easier for them to have deposited the body in the grove on their side of the town. If Aelward Ded did actually make such a deathbed confession, it is almost the sole hint we have of the true author of the mischief which threw little William into a state of catalepsy. If the family story was true that William had gone as scullion to the Archdeacon of Norwich, that would, at any rate, account for the boy being in Thorpe Wood. Finally, we have the statement of Theobald, a renegade Jew of Cambridge, that it was the custom among Jews to sacrifice a boy for Passover in some European city fixed by lot, and that the lot, which had been taken at Narbonne, had fallen upon Norwich. It is this statement that is the foundation of the myth of the Blood Accusation.

I observe that Mr. Zangwill, in reviewing the book, cast doubt on the very existence of this Theobald of Cambridge, but there is one point in his so-called statement which could scarcely have been invented by Thomas, for the latter was not likely to have known that Narbonne was the chief seat of Jewish learning at the time. Our editors have a suggestion that the only previous case known of Jews murdering a Christian lad, and mentioned by Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, was possibly part of a Purim frolic. Now I should imagine that the statement which Thomas puts into Theobald's mouth might have been a wilful misunderstanding of some such reference. On his part, Theobald may have stated that the Jews pretended to hang boys as Haman, but really in mockery of Christ. Both Thomas and William's family would have found it to their interest to describe it as a custom of the Jews to hang Christian boys in mockery of Christ. Altogether there seem two alternative

explanations of the facts, as far as we can extract them out of the mixture of hearsay and concoction given us by Thomas of Monmouth. Either the lad William really became a scullion of the Archdeacon, and fell into a cataleptic fit while taking a walk in Thorpe Wood, perhaps on being frightened by the appearance of Aelward Ded, or he fell into the fit while visiting Eleazer's house in the Jewry, and the Jews, in fear of complications, removed his body to Thorpe Wood. Against the former supposition is the absence of any evidence that he ever did make his appearance in the Archdeacon's house; against the latter view is the unlikelihood of the Jews carrying the lad's body right across the city when they could just as easily have deposited it just outside the Jewry. The editors seem inclined on the whole to think that something was done to the boy by the Jews either by accident or in some grim jest. But they have not taken into account the difficulty of the place of discovery, if the Jews had anything to do with it, nor do they attach sufficient significance to the probability of the boy being alive even on the Easter Tuesday, though they appear to think it probable (p. lxix). The difficulty of the whole case is, as the editors observe, attribution of the crime, if it was a crime, as a ritual murder to the Jews. If the myth had already been in existence, one could easily understand it being applied afresh to the Norwich Jews with the disappearance of the lad William. Now the myth was started by William's family, who were all ecclesiastics. The boy's body is found, with the head shaven or tonsured, and with marks of punctures by thorns, on the Saturday after Good Friday. The probability of some form of crucifixion having been gone through with the body is considerably raised by this fact, if we can trust to it. Now, if Jews resorted to such a measure, it could only be out of mere wanton cruelty and hatred; but cannot we imagine fanatical Christians, of a low degree of culture, deriving from their crass views about the crucifixion that salvation will be brought down upon a lad and his family by undergoing the *form* of crucifixion on Good Friday? Cases have been known even of men committing suicide by crucifying themselves, and it is a well-known principle of folklore that the folk-mind considers a form as good as the reality. Suppose such an idea to have existed in William's family, suppose them to have gone through the form of crucifixion with the little lad on Good Friday, and a cataleptic fit to have supervened while the poor little lad was on the cross, almost all the facts of the case would be explained. The lies told by the family to account for his disappearance, the attribution by the family to the Jews of an idea which would be unfamiliar and repugnant to the Jews, but quite familiar and natural to themselves, the tonsured

scalp, the discovery the day after Good Friday in Thorpe Wood, near the boy's own home, the callousness with which no attempt was made to resuscitate the boy after rumours had been spread about attributing his disappearance to the Jews, and the absence of any pressure on the part of the family to bring the Jews to any form of trial involving the taking of evidence. One can also understand from this point of view how the family would attempt to get from some converted Jew or other some plausible support for their concocted accusation. On the whole this suggestion seems to me to account for more of the facts than the view favoured by our editors — that the lad had fallen a victim to some ill-treatment on the part of the Jews. This does not account for the crucial difficulty of the whole question, the rise of the myth; for one does not see why William's family, in that case, did not accuse the Jews of murder pure and simple. If they had themselves attempted some form of crucifixion-ritual, with which they would be perfectly familiar, why should they have attributed it to the Jews?

On the whole the probabilities, to my mind, are that the lad William of Norwich was not directly murdered by any one, but fell into a cataleptic fit while undergoing the form of crucifixion at the hands of his own relatives, who thought they were increasing his and their sanctity by going through the process with him which, to their minds, had brought salvation and sanctity to the whole world. When the mock crucifixion seemed to have turned into a real one, owing to the boy's fit, they determined to remove suspicion from themselves by attributing to the Jews a travesty of the feeling in their own mind. William was indeed a martyr, but a martyr to Christian, not to Jewish, bigotry.

The fact that the boy was alive when reburied by his relatives throws, to my mind, a flood of light upon the whole problem. Whoever shaved his head, and crowned him with thorns, and gagged him, must have done so without any ultimate intention of finally silencing him by murder. They must therefore have had confidence in being able to preserve the boy's silence, even after he had been released from the cross, supposing him to have gone through some form of crucifixion. Now the Jews could have had no hold upon the boy, and would have been obliged to have silenced him by murder if the accusation of the family were true. But William's own relatives might have felt confident that they could keep him quiet, or might quite readily have been willing for the boy to tell his tale, if they thought that that would add to his and their sanctity. If therefore the boy was alive when reburied on the Tuesday by his relatives, it could only have been his family who had gone through the process



of crucifying with him, if any such process was undergone by the poor little lad.

JOSEPH JACOBS.

### STRACK'S "BIBLICAL ARAMAIC."

*Grammatik des Biblischen Aramäisch mit den nach Handschriften berichtigten Texten und einem Wörterbuch*, von PROF. DR. HERMANN L. STRACK. Leipzig, 1897. (38 + 46 pp.<sup>1</sup>)

IT need only be said of this little volume that it fully confirms its author's great reputation as a practical scholar and teacher to ensure it a hearty welcome. For in whatever mood we find the Professor—whether as a controversialist relentlessly hostile to Jew-baiters in general and to ex-Court-Chaplain Stöcker in particular, or shattering with one mighty blow the whole fabric of the Blood Accusation myth, or in his quieter moods as Hebrew grammarian, exegetist, Talmudist, or palaeographer—all his works are stamped with the well-known impress of German learning. In the wonderfully cheap, compact, and scholarly book before me Prof. Strack has furnished students with ample material for the study of the Aramaic portions of the Old Testament (Ezra iv. 7–vi. 18 and vii. 11–28; Dan. ii. 1–vii. 28; Gen. xxxi. 47; and Jer. x. 11). In the preface our author informs us that as long ago as 1879 he formed the idea of writing a Biblical-Aramaic Grammar, but postponed his work for fear of clashing with the work of his friend, Prof. Kautzsch. His fears were groundless; both grammars are entirely independent of each other, and are, in fact, treated from a different standpoint. Strack's grammar is intended for beginners, whilst the elaborate grammar of Prof. Kautzsch, with its detailed study of the syntax and full introduction to the comparative study of the Aramaic group of languages, caters for advanced students. Our text is based upon that of Baer's edition; when the readings differ, Strack's is superior. Baer's variants are given in the foot-notes. Our author has, however, omitted to mention that Baer gives תְּעִירָה (with ה) in Dan. vi. 13, and כְּשִׁפְרָא (with small and large פ) in Dan. vi. 20. The two editions should be used side by side. Baer gives a fuller list of paradigms, and a complete account of the Massoretic notes and variant readings of Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali. Strack does not give the tonic accents, nor does he vocalize the numerous *Kethibs* which abound in the Books of Daniel and Ezra. The new edition has two more paragraphs in the grammatical portion of the work—§ 1, which is

<sup>1</sup> A review of the first edition of this work, by Prof. Bacher, appeared in *J. Q. R.*, vol. VIII, p. 505.